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FOREIGN NOTES

The Schoolmaster, September 16, 1893.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF 16,094 CHILDREN SEEN, SHOWING NUMBERS PRESENTING EACH DEFECT AND NUMBERS IN CERTAIN GROUPS.

Defect or Group of Children.	Boys.	Girls.
Cranial abnormality.....	254	230
External ears.....	108	36
Epicanthis.....	97	66
Palate.....	121	83
Nasal bones.....	39	48
"Other defects in development," including as below.....	70	67
AS ABNORMAL NERVE-SIGNS:		
General balance.....	25	47
Expression.....	50	68
Frontals overacting.....	207	39
Corrugation.....	8	3
Orbicularis oculi relaxed.....	112	101
Eye-movements.....	119	83
Head-balance.....	28	85
Head-balance weak.....	261	167
Hand-balance nervous.....	72	112
Finger-twitches.....	32	41
Lordosis.....	14	35
"Other nerve-signs".....	142	96
GROUPS OF CASES:		
Eye cases.....	212	191
Nutrition low, pale, thin, delicate.....	184	220
Mentally dull in school.....	646	521
"Exceptional pupils," including as below.....	63	57
Children maimed or paralysed.....	36	35
Children with history of "fits" during school life.....	16	18
Imbeciles and idiots.....	3	3
Children mentally exceptional.....	1	
Children "feebly gifted mentally".....	33	35

AMERICA.

The Journal of Education, (London,) Dec. 1, 1893.

Senator Peffer, of Kansas, has introduced into the United States senate a bill for the creation of a national department of education, in charge of a secretary, who is to take rank with the secretaries of war, the navy, &c. Another cabinet officer would not be at all superfluous, and the cause of education deserves such national recognition. The magnitude of the interests involved is shown by the fact that there are enrolled in the public schools of the United States 12,699,196 pupils. The average daily attendance is 8,004,275. The attendant expense varies from 1,107,1970 dollars in Mississippi to 17,543,880 dollars in New York. From Chicago statistics we gather some interesting particulars as to the ages of pupils at the date of their first enrolment. In the year 1891-92, 14.7 per cent. were under the age of seven; 72.2 per cent. had passed their eleventh year; 15 per cent. were over seventeen. We fear that some headmasters would look askance at the 2,367 students who sought admission to school at this somewhat mature age. The movement for University extension continues to grow apace, and at least two monthly journals are issued in

connexion with it. Equally satisfactory is the news that attempts to supply free text-books in schools have proved successful. The plan is being generally adopted in Pennsylvania, Pittsburg being the only place where it is opposed.

AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL ENTHUSIASM.

Professor Ripper, principal of the Sheffield Technical school, has given his views on American education, to an interviewer, after a visit to the World's Fair. What struck him most was the universal enthusiasm for education. State vied with state in educational exhibits, and the universities were as keen to put themselves *en evidence* as the common schools. It is satisfactory to hear that, in Professor Ripper's opinion, England is still distinctly ahead of America in its provision for the education of the mechanical engineer. But the efforts and sacrifices of the American citizen to avail himself of the higher education throw into the shade all the achievements of our University extensionists. While staying at the Chicago university, Professor Ripper found that many of the waiters at table were university students, some of them holding high degrees. The same was the case with the lady waiters at the Exhibition, and even among the city lamplighters and newspaper sellers several were found to be working for a degree.

GERMANY.

Idleness and Dissipation.—Dr. Schmoller, professor of political economy at Berlin, has been following the example of Professor Mommsen in inveighing against the idleness and dissipation of German students in the earlier years of their university course. Speaking not without knowledge, I venture to say that the amount of work done by the most frivolous will compare favourably with the labours of the average poll man at Cambridge.

HILFSSCHULE.

From Hanover comes a satisfactory report of the progress of the *Hilfsschule*, opened at Easter, 1892. The fundamental idea of the school was to provide special teaching for children of less than normal capacity. The increase has been from 89 pupils at the outset to 127 at the time the report was published. At the entrance examination the intellectual condition of the children, most of whom had been taken from the *Bürger-schulen*, was found to be deplorable. Such knowledge as they had acquired was vague and chaotic; the majority could neither read nor write; only two were familiar with numbers beyond ten, and the arithmetical teaching had to begin in every class from one. The result of the year's work has surpassed all expectation. Those in the upper classes can now read fluently and write legibly. In religion they can answer questions on set passages of Scripture without hesitation, and some can relate the matter continuously and quote texts. Most schoolmasters are confronted from time to time with pupils seemingly unteachable, and this experiment of grouping such children apart may find approval. As

to the means by which the good work was achieved, more details may be desired. I gather that those who suffered from defects in the power of speech were separated until the defects were remedied. Every lesson was followed by an interval of ten minutes. Afternoon lessons were avoided; the classes were made as small as possible; and attention was paid to health and cleanliness. There is nothing very novel here, and it would appear that personal tact on the part of the teachers was the most efficient instrument employed. An obvious objection to the scheme is that a certain stigma may attach, however unjustly, to the pupils of such a school.

MANUAL LABOR.

The cause of manual work, which, in spite of the statement of the speaker of the house of commons, makes good progress everywhere, receives in Germany increasing support. In the district of Minden special courses are being given for mistresses in *Volksschulen*. The number of those who attend varies from twenty to twenty-four. It would be interesting to know how many schoolmistresses in England are receiving technical instruction of the same kind. In Berlin, the pupils in the schools for *Handfertigkeitunterricht* numbered 192 in 1887 and 886 last year; whilst the Leipzig *Lehrerbildungsanstalt*, which opened in 1884 with 30 students, now has 151, and has outgrown its buildings. Nor can it be said that the growth is due to artificial fostering. To the Berlin schools the State contributes 2,000 M., the town 1,800 M., the total annual grant being thus about 4s. 3d. for each scholar taught. It will be remembered that the English grant is 6s. if the teaching is fairly good, or 7s. if excellent.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

The sixteenth annual meeting of the Society of Elementary Teachers in Hanover was attended by more than a thousand members. Herr Grabbe, of Minden, delivered an address, on the best means of preventing the results of the education given in elementary schools from being lost. He contended that the idea of compelling pupils of such schools to attend up to their sixteenth year was impracticable. Apprentices now learned little from their masters, and factory hands were still worse off. Attendance at the continuation schools should be made obligatory on boys up to their eighteenth, or girls up to their seventeenth year. These schools must be free; and the six hours a week which they require (or from girls four) should be taken from the hours of work and not from the leisure time of the pupils. That these proposals are feasible was shown by a comparison of the regulations which prevail in other States. Herr Schuettler, of Hanover, read an interesting paper on the time during which boys should remain under one master. He urged that it should be for their full school course. The teacher would thus learn to know the capacity of his pupils, and the power of character to mould character would have free play. The system would be perfect if the master kept his boys for the eight years of their school life; but it would be a gain if

he had them for three years instead of, as now, for one. Dr. Wehrhahn, inspector of schools, professed himself to a certain extent in favour of the system advocated by Herr Schuettler, but believed that it was not suitable for every school, nor in the case of every teacher. Surely there would be great danger of one-sidedness in the development both of mind and character under such a scheme of education.

DECREASE OF CANDIDATES.

The number of candidates for masterships in higher schools is slowly decreasing. Where there were 596 in 1885, there are now 260. Frequent warnings that the scholastic profession is overcrowded have had their effect. Nevertheless, it seems that there are still 1,800 qualified candidates seeking State employment in Prussia. Vacancies occur at the average rate of 220 a year. Thus, some of the applicants must wait eight years before obtaining an appointment. Even if they are engaged as *Hilfslehrer*, the time spent in that capacity is not reckoned in the years of service which confer a right to a pension. The German schoolmaster has, however, the comfort of knowing that when once *definitiv*, he is secure in his office, and that his salary, if small, is progressive.

ANTI-SEMITISMUS.

Anti-Semitismus is still rampant. It has been frequently alleged by a certain section of the German press that books are used in Jewish schools which contain doctrines which are immoral and subversive of the present constitution of society. By order of the Prussian minister of education an examination of the books in question has been made. The result is to show that such allegations are absolutely without foundation.

FRANCE, LA LOI VIGER.

The full text of the law of the 25th of July, 1893, is now to hand. The new enactment, modifying the law of 1889, effects a material improvement in the position of the teachers in primary schools. The chief gain is in regard to the percentage of teachers included in the higher classes. The rate of promotion to higher classes is accelerated. Advancement now depends upon seniority and merit, and the new law lays down the proportional weight to be given to the two claims.

ITALY.

The Italian minister of public education has appointed a commission to study the question of a national system of physical education. The commission held its first meeting on the 26th of September. It is anticipated that its labours will be of long duration.

O. B. R.